

v.

Art of the Chocolate Buddha

"If you do not abstain from eating meat," said the Zen master, "you will not reach satori." Then he gave to each of his disciples a chocolate replica of the divine Buddha.

"I guess we are not so smart," whispered one of the students. "He knows we are sneaking in hamburgers."

vi.

How Woody Showed Buddha-Wisdom

When Woody was a little boy, his mother asked him what he wanted to be. "I want to play piano at Carnegie Hall," he said.

"You can't do that," his mother yelled. "I can't afford a piano."

"How about if I play a violin then?"

"Still too expensive," she said.

"All right then, I'll be a member of the KKK."

"Look," said Woody's mother, "I'll buy you a pencil and you can be a writer."

"Ok," said Woody, "but it has to have a very sensuous eraser."

-- Ben Pleasants

Beverly Hills CA

FOUR AFTER THE SANSKRIT

i

Dearest, when we were introduced
& became lovers
everyone approved.

& when we exchanged vows
how delighted they all were.
& how jubilant
when our first child was born.
But now that we

have lived together
over seven years
& I still refuse
to carry on behind your back
my friends
look at me
as if I'm crazy.

ii.

Delighted to be driving
thru a pounding hail
& howling wind storm
in a dark &
unfamiliar neighborhood
at night, the
adventurous young wife
has an address
scribbled
on a note pad
on the dash board
& an overnight bag
on the seat
beside her
& a husband
who is out of town.

iii.

Mother hums in the kitchen;
father changes the channel,
refills his pipe
& settles into his chair;
baby brother,
purring,
spins the wheel
of his toy truck;
but daughter -- daughter
is nowhere about.
From the boathouse trees
at the edge of the lake
with a sudden clapping of wings
birds
fly into the moon.

iv.

When my husband, the colonel,
is off on maneuvers,
& it's just getting dark
& the rain pounds on the roof
& steams up the window
& the leaves all whip thru the street
like a stampede of civilians

& everything's screaming,
I could just die.
My heart pumps like crazy.
Doubly so if I'm with
a guy who's anywhere cute
& knows what he's doing.

CANVASSING

-- after Bhatta Sivasvāmin

I'm sorry sir, my husband isn't home.
His mother suffered one of her attacks
& telephoned us in the middle of the night
& whined on for an hour till he promised
that he'd catch the first flight out this morning.
& so off he went.
& I suppose he won't be back till late tomorrow night.
That old fraud!
She can get him to do anything.
Whereas he doesn't give a damn how lonesome I get
sleeping in this big house all alone.
But look -- why don't you come on in
& show me what it is you're selling?
I mean, who knows, I might be interested!

SATORI

-- after Srngaratilaka

God knows
I've chanted
& worshipped
& fasted
& meditated
& prayed
my whole life.
Still,
the sight
of her youthful
body
the moment
my fingers
undid
the knot
of her dress
was as close
as I think
I will ever
come to satori.